

TimeLines

Newsletter of the Concordia History Department

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Editor: Mary Vipond

Editorial Assistant:
Donna Whittaker

History Department
1455 deMaisonnette W.
Montreal, QC H3G 1M8
Tel: 514-848-2424, ex. 2435
Fax: 514-848-4538
E-mail:
history@alcor.concordia.ca
<http://artsandscience.concordia.ca/history/>

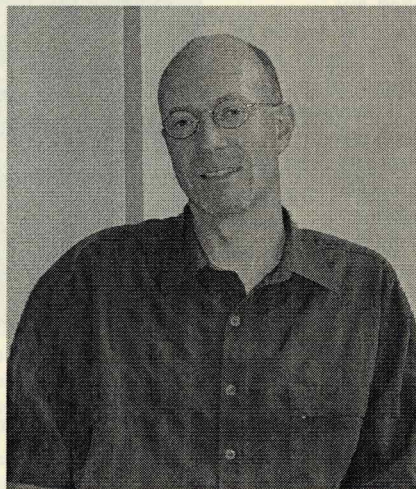
Looking Forward to a New Year

Graham Carr, Chair

In his three years as Chair of the History Department, Ron Rudin had many terrific ideas. Some of them he even implemented. Restoring the departmental newsletter in 2003 was one. Looking back through past issues of *TimeLines* offers a welcome reminder of how much, and how quickly, our department has changed. While those of us who have been at Concordia for some time undoubtedly miss recently retired colleagues and the students who have graduated to other challenges, the past few years have brought extraordinary growth, renewal and transformation to our department.

During Ron's tenure as Chair we hired five new tenure-stream faculty, two of whom—Nora Jaffary and Gavin Taylor—we welcome to the department in this academic year. The research and teaching interests of all our recent hires have dramatically altered the profile of the department, expanding our fields of expertise in ways that are often complementary to the scholarly interests of existing faculty. Students are the prime beneficiaries of these changes and during the past three years our enrolments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have increased substantially. The department has implemented a number of major curriculum changes designed to make our courses more accessible to non-majors, while offering an expanded range of seminars for honors and graduate students. In addition, the level of funded research won by our faculty has increased markedly, and the amount of fellowship money we now offer to graduate students has also grown through new awards.

Although Ron is too modest (or too busy) to take credit for these positive changes, he was certainly instrumental, as Chair, in setting a clear academic direction for the department. While maintaining an impressive level of research productivity he worked tirelessly on our behalf both within the university and in the wider community. For that we owe him a huge debt of gratitude.



Of course, from my perspective as incoming Chair, the legacy of the previous three years is a bit daunting in terms of the work rate and the dynamic precedents that were set. Fortunately, there are many encouraging signs ahead for the department. To borrow a phrase, "the future looks good for history." Our courses are bursting at the seams and we expect to hire at least one new tenure-stream professor in Asian history for 2005-06. This year the History Department is also hosting the inaugural event in an annual endowed lecture series, the Saleh Sassoon

Mahlab Lecture Series on the History of Muslim-Jewish Relations. Indeed, it promises to be an extremely lively year in the intellectual life of the department. Several internationally renowned historians are coming to Concordia to give guest lectures on a wide diversity of topics. As usual, we have planned an ambitious colloquium program and several of our faculty and graduate students are involved in ongoing inter-university workshops and seminars. All in all, it promises to be a high-energy year for the Concordia History Department and I look forward to what we can achieve. ■

Volume 3, Number 1

Our New Faculty Members

The History Department is once again pleased to introduce our newest full-time faculty members.

Nora Jaffary

Dr. Nora Jaffary joins the Department as our specialist in the history of Latin America and the Hispanic World. Dr. Jaffary earned her B.A. from the University of Toronto, her M.A. from the University of British Columbia and her Ph.D. from Columbia University. She has published numerous articles and her dissertation was recently published by the University of Nebraska Press under the title False Mystics: Deviant Orthodoxy in Colonial Mexico. During the 2004-05 academic year, Nora will be teaching introductory courses on the History of Latin America, an introductory course on World history, and a course that uses Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel, One Hundred Years of Solitude, as a venue through which to examine Latin America's modern history and its representation. Nora introduces herself below:

My interest in Latin America was sparked by a trip I took to Brazil after completing my undergraduate degree in History and English at the University of Toronto in 1992. I volunteered with a land reform movement and lived for several months in a small agrarian community in the northeast. While there, I was struck by the resilience with which people who confronted both violence and poverty on a daily basis continued to live their lives. I was also impressed with the prominence of African culture in this New World setting, by the dynamics of ethnicity and gender, and by the uses people made of spirituality – particularly liberation theology – to achieve political ends.

In the fall of 1993, I returned to Canada to enter the University of British Columbia's graduate program in History. I had applied to graduate school thinking I would continue to focus on Canadian Native history, the area in which I had concentrated as an undergraduate. Intrigued by the aboriginal cultures of the North-West coast, I wrote my Master's thesis on chronicles of first contact produced by the Tlingit communities of the Alaskan panhandle. However, in my course work at UBC, I shifted my emphasis to Latin American history as I became engrossed in seminars and readings dealing with the dramatic story of that region's past. I was excited to learn of the body of sources documenting the pre-

Columbian history of Mesoamerica, and I was intrigued by the differences I could detect between the Spanish colonies' experiences of conquest and colonization and those of the British and French settlements with whose history I was more familiar.

I decided to make the full transition to Latin American History when I entered Columbia University's History Ph.D. program in the fall of 1994. Although I considered following up on my initial interest in Brazil, a trip to Mexico City in the summer of 1995 convinced me to pursue further research into New Spain's colonial past. I spent that summer perusing Mexico's National Archives and exploring the enormous capital city, where I later decided to live during the latter three years of my doctoral program. Mexico City is

enormous, dirty, and smelly. It can take two hours to traverse it by public transportation, but it is also a fascinating, and I find, a rejuvenating place. Evidence of its inhabitants' pre-Columbian, colonial, and post-colonial lives is tangible not only in museums and in archives, but in every bus trip or street meal one has in the city. Its residents constantly engage in the lively use of public space, and it has an entertaining (if often depressing) political history.

As well as enjoying daily life in Mexico, I also decided to base myself there – intellectually and physically – because of the archival material I found. The National Archives is perhaps the best organized and most accessible in Latin America, and shortly after arriving there, I located the body of sources I would use to write my doctoral thesis. These documents are the transcripts from Inquisition trials of a group of religious deviants the Mexican court investigated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for being "false mystics." I found the material fascinating because it recorded the intellectual history of non-elite people, detailing how and why some of the most economically marginalized individuals in colonial society had challenged the Catholic church, the most powerful institution of social control in their midst. In a very different setting from the one in which I had first become exposed to Latin America's past and present, these Mexican mystics presented me with an opportunity to examine the history of agency, ethnicity, gender and religion that had engaged me on my first trip to the region. ■



New Faculty Members cont'd.

Gavin Taylor

Dr. Gavin Taylor joins us this year as our specialist in Colonial North American history. Dr. Taylor earned his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Toronto and his Ph.D. from the College of William and Mary. His dissertation, entitled "Ruled by a Pen: Land, Language, and the Invention of Maine," is being considered for publication. His current research is a study of treaties and treaty-making in early North America. Gavin will be teaching an introductory course in early U.S. history, a course on Colonial America and a course on Native American history. Gavin introduces himself below:

My arrival at Concordia feels like a homecoming to me: a return both to Montreal and to history.

Born in Philadelphia, I spent my childhood in Montreal, where it is hard to miss the ways in which the present is shaped by the past—how shots fired on the heights of a cliff more than two centuries ago might have a profound effect on everyday politics and social relations in Quebec.

As a high school student I didn't have much interest in history, which seemed like a moth-eaten patchwork of hero worship and rote memorization. But a CEGEP course on Canada before Confederation introduced me to an entirely different approach to the subject: as a matter of interpretation and debate, based on a careful examination of documentary evidence. The idea that I could actively reconstruct the past through a close reading of texts was a revelation to me.

I was hooked, and when I enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Toronto the next year I chose History as my major. My interests were quite literally all over the map—I took courses in European, American and African history, as well as historiography—but in my last year of study I was drawn to a year-long course in Iroquois history taught by the late Graeme Patterson. The heart of the course was an examination of the early years of contact between Europeans and Iroquoian groups, recorded primarily through the *Jesuit Relations* and the

memoirs of French explorers. The sudden meeting of two very different cultures—absolutist France at the time of the Counter-Reformation, and horticulturist Iroquois during the Beaver Wars—fascinated and disturbed me.

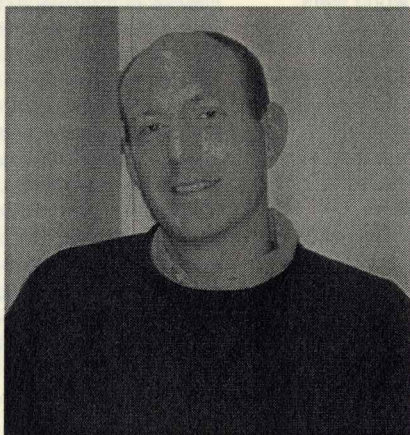
In 1990-91, the year I took the course, the subject seemed especially relevant. The previous summer Mohawks and the Canadian army were locked in a standoff over a golf course the town of Oka was planning to build on a burial ground in Kanesatake. Most observers recognized that the dispute over the land, and the government's heavy-handed approach to ending it, were the legacy of a colonial encounter that began in the seventeenth century.

When I entered the doctoral program at the College of William and Mary, I was interested in exploring this encounter in greater depth, and found inspiration in James Axtell, Bruce Trigger and other scholars who were trying to reconstruct Native societies and cultures at the time of European contact. My dissertation was a territorial history of Maine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, looking at the different ways that Native and

European groups occupied and imagined the land. Influenced by critical geography and postmodern theory, I argued that representations of the land gained currency when they were backed by a critical mass of people and institutions—a tendency that ultimately tipped the balance in favour of Anglo-American notions of territoriality.

After teaching at Brock and Bucknell Universities, I enrolled in the journalism program at Carleton University with the hopes of pursuing a career as a reporter. I freelanced and did stints at the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*. When the *Gazette* sent me to James Bay to cover a forest fire that had engulfed a Cree community, I found myself explaining to a wide audience what the land meant to Native hunters and why it played a central role in their culture.

As I return to teaching this year, I hope that my experience in journalism will make me a better historian—a more compelling storyteller and a sharper observer. In any event, I'm glad to be home. ■



Research Awards

This was a particularly successful year for faculty research grants. Three of our members have received grants to aid in their scholarly research. **Norman Ingram** was awarded \$60,000 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for his three-year study on the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* and its relationship with Germany from the beginning of World War I to the end of World War II. **Andrew Ivaska** was awarded \$35,094 from the Fonds Québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture: Programme d'établissement de nouveaux professeurs-chercheurs for a three-year study of gender, public space, and urban identity in postwar Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. **Shannon McSheffrey** was awarded \$74,500 also from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for her three-year study of Londoners and the Law in the latter half of the 15th century.

Norman Ingram

"Eyes Across the Rhine: The Ligue des droits de l'homme and the German Problem, 1914-1944"

The Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH) is of central importance to any understanding of French history in the era of the two world wars. Founded in 1898 at the height of the Dreyfus Affair, it quickly became the rallying point for republicans of all political stripes. By 1914 it had established itself as a force to be reckoned with in French politics, counting many deputies, senators, and ministers within its membership and wielding enormous influence within the corridors of power. In the interwar years, its membership rose to some 220,000 men and women across metropolitan France and in the colonies.

In May 1940, as the staff of the Ligue's headquarters carefully packed the LDH's archives into crates to be taken away for safe-keeping, the Germans suddenly invaded and shortly thereafter arrived in Paris. That was the last that was seen of the Ligue's archives for over fifty years.

In 1991, when I first became interested in the Ligue, Madeleine Rebérioux – who in addition to being the first woman president of the Ligue is also an important historian of the Third Republic – told me that the Germans had "burned" the Ligue's archives. This assertion, made without the slightest proof, seemed intuitively to run counter to everything one knew about the Nazis. It made no sense to assume that the Nazis would have burned papers which gave them instant access to entire networks of socialists, radicals, Freemasons, Jews, and republicans of every persuasion. With the on-going collapse of the Soviet Union, I thought it far more likely that the LDH's archives would some day turn up in Moscow, most likely captured by the Red Army in the last days of the Second World War.

That is precisely what happened.

The Ligue's papers had indeed been transferred at some point from Paris to Berlin. They escaped destruction in the Allied bombing of Potsdam and Berlin, and were taken for safe-

keeping to Czechoslovakia where they fell into the hands of the advancing Red Army in the spring of 1945. The Soviets, like the Germans before them, recognized the importance of these archives. Along with other French documentation (police archives, military intelligence reports, *inter alia*), they were carted back to Moscow where they remained hidden from view until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

My research project examines the evolution of the relationship of the Ligue des droits de l'homme with Germany, and its stance regarding the "German problem," over the course of a thirty-year period which saw two invasions of France and an uneasy twenty-year interbellum. I am studying these questions through a detailed comparative analysis of the newly-rediscovered archives of the Ligue, recently brought back to Paris from the former Soviet Union, together with various German archives.

Andrew Ivaska

"Gender, Public Space, and the Politics of Urban Identity in Postwar Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1945-1980"

This project explores gendered struggles over urban public space in late-colonial and early-postcolonial Dar es Salaam in relation to changing constructions of urban life in Tanzanian public discourse. As was the case for many cities across Africa, the three decades or so after World War II were times of intense demographic, political and cultural change for Dar es Salaam. Amidst booming migration, high unemployment in town, the shrinking of the capital's once overwhelming male majority, and the appearance of women in new kinds of public roles, the new spaces of work and leisure in Dar es Salaam's expanding downtown area often became zones of gender tension and conflict. At the same time, the rise of a state ideology valorizing rural life against a "decadent" city lent great political importance to the way urban life was perceived.

Taking these intersecting dynamics as points of departure, this project will investigate the ways in which public spaces including offices, cafés,

Research Awards cont'd.

bars, nightclubs, buses and commuter routes, and even street corners, were used, shaped and understood by new urban publics in postwar Dar es Salaam. Why did some spaces in downtown Dar es Salaam emerge as highly charged zones of gender conflict even as others may have not? How may struggles along gender lines have shaped, or been shaped by, other social cleavages in town, such as generations and inequalities in wealth? What sorts of urban publics were emerging in the cultural debates through which issues connected to the use of public space appear to have been fought out?

The study also seeks to analyze the gendered character of dominant imaginings of urban life in postwar Tanzania and to specify the precise place of the capital city in these constructions. How might they have related to shifting norms of masculinity and femininity, or to attempts by colonial and postcolonial states to articulate and implement policy toward urban areas frequently viewed by officials as posing intractable problems? What was the relationship between urban policy and ideas about the city circulating among various Tanzanian publics? Finally, what sort of comparative perspective can this investigation of an East African context offer in relation to work that has explored the place of sexuality in constructions of urban life in Western contexts?

As a project exploring the complex relationship between these physical and discursive struggles for Dar es Salaam, the proposed study challenges a dominant trend in scholarship on Tanzania focusing on the rural. Furthermore, with an insistence on the centrality of the cultural politics of everyday life to contests over the physical spaces and social meanings of Tanzania's capital, the project seeks to connect issues of sexuality, urban space, and the state – domains which have too rarely been brought together in Africanist historiography despite calls to the contrary. Finally, with historians of Africa just beginning to consider the postcolonial period, the results of this research will both join a fledgling body of Africanist historiography taking on the crucial decades of the 1960s and 1970s, and do so within a postwar frame that highlights the complex continuities and disjunctures that together shaped the transition from colonial to postcolonial polities.

Shannon McSheffrey

"Londoners and the Law, 1450-1525"

Law is one of the primary means through which people negotiate their relationships. Legal ways of thinking permeated late medieval English culture, shaping everyday economic transactions, neighbourly relations, even the making and breaking of sexual and marital bonds. At the same time as the law helped shape social relationships, it in turn was shaped by the world in which it functioned: both formal and informal legal processes were deeply affected by the complex workings of power and influence in English society.

In this research project I study the role that law in its many forms played in the lives of Londoners between the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The approach I take borrows from what Peter Coss has termed "law in history," a methodology that seeks to do more than juxtapose apparently discrete categories like "law" and "society." From this perspective, as E.P. Thompson famously asserted, law was at "every bloody level" of social relations, deeply embedded in their workings. This is not to deny that the profession of the law itself had a certain autonomous discourse and structure. The focus of this study, however, is not on the professional personnel of the courts, but rather on the way non-lawyers used the law and legal modes of thinking, both inside legal tribunals as jurors, litigants, and defendants, and outside the courtroom in everyday life. If late medieval people used the law, the law in turn shaped or constrained their choices and relationships. This study will contribute to our understanding of both legal processes and the structures of social and political power in late medieval England. More broadly, it will play its part in new directions in historical legal scholarship which focus on the workings of law in society.

The project is focused in time and place – London from about 1450 to 1525 – and takes a broad pluralist view of what constituted the law rather than emphasizing a particular court or legal process. This involves examining a wide array of records from a range of legal forums, both church and secular courts, from the most local of neighbourhood or parish tribunals to the courts of the king and the pope, as well as considering informal legal processes such as arbitration, unofficial hearings, and negotiations. As most such records remain unpublished, this study depends heavily on archival material held at the Public Record Office and other London-area repositories.

Research Awards cont'd.

Shannon McSheffrey cont'd.

I plan to centre this study on the ways in which power and authority structures in London society both influenced and were bolstered by access to legal mechanisms. Medieval English society was undoubtedly hierarchical, but any overly simplistic reading of the effects of that hierarchy distorts our understanding of late medieval English social relations. While generally people of higher social station, for instance, had better access to legal remedies, any analysis has to take into account the effects of vertical lines of influence and power through patronage networks, kinship ties, and the duties of Christian charity. These could allow people who held less direct power and authority to partake of the greater social advantages of those higher up the ladder. ■

Long Service Recognition Awards

At a ceremony held at the Centre Mont-Royal on May 12, 2004 Concordia University fêted its long-serving faculty and staff. Amongst those who were honoured were Frank Chalk for 40 years of service, Robert Tittler for 35 years, and Donna Whittaker for 20 years of service. In honour of his long service, Frank was asked to give a speech reflecting on the changes that have come to Concordia during his time here. His speech is reprinted below:

"Forty Years At Concordia University"

Rector Lowy, Mr. Benedetti, Chancellor Molson, friends in the administration, faculty and staff, it is my honour to address you on this my 40th anniversary at Concordia. 1964 was an exciting year to arrive here. Sir George Williams University had rented offices and classrooms in the building on Drummond Street, north of the Norris Building. The beat of the belly dancers at the bar on one side of the building and the Gypsy violinists of the Tokay Restaurant on the other side reverberated through its narrow downstairs hallway. Just a few blocks away, under the watchful eyes of Principal Robert Rae, Douglas Burns Clark, Jack Bordan, and John O'Brien, the foundation of the largest university structure in Canada, the Henry F. Hall Building, had recently been poured. This was pretty heady stuff for a newly minted assistant professor moving from his first full-time job, a post at Texas A&M University, where undergraduates traded guns, not hi-fidelity stereo equipment, and halls were adorned with ads for chrome-plated 45 calibre automatics, including some with two spare magazines.

Three advantages drew me to Montreal: I could immediately introduce a year-long course about the history of Africa, a new field not yet taught at 99 percent of the universities in North America, although it was already being taught by Donald Savage at Loyola College; the Sir George Williams math department offered my wife, Jean, a teaching position, so there were jobs for both of us; and thanks to Steve Scheinberg's cleverly planned tour of Montreal, replete with thrilling stops for bagels on St. Viateur St. and croissants at *Aux Delices*, I fell in love with Montreal. Mind you, Steve never warned me that I would gain 10 pounds in my first year here.

Forty years is a long time to encapsulate in five minutes, but let me try to remind you of the high points:

- The exhilaration of erecting greatly expanded academic departments on the firm foundations established by our predecessors and the flood of original ideas which arrived with new faculty every fall, a thrill we are experiencing once again.
- The serendipitous merger between Sir George Williams and Loyola which brought to my department treasures like Mary Vipond, Bob Tittler, Geoff Adams, Graeme Decarie and Ron Rudin.
- The planning and completion of the expanded Vanier Library, the McConnell Library Building, the Richard J. Renaud Science Complex, and the Psychology Building.
- The introduction of smart classrooms and the vigorous support provided by Instructional and Information Technology Services.
- The evolution of a Concordia University administration led by Rector & Vice-Chancellor Fred Lowy which encouraged innovation from below, respected the academic enterprise, and built the bridges that secured government and private funding to help us become as good as we could be.

We still have a long way to go:

- We must raise the priority of library funding within our budget and mobilize donors to provide bridge funding for

Long Service cont'd.

library development until government recognizes its importance.

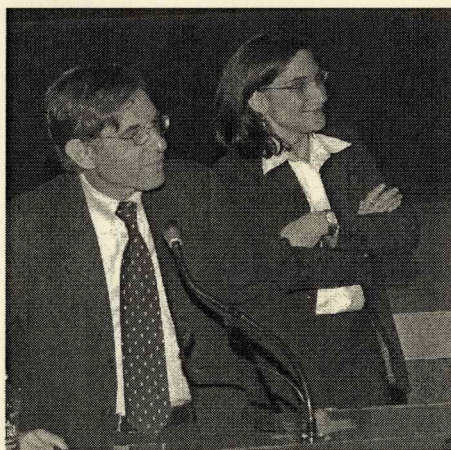
- We must expand and extend our internship and co-op education opportunities so that more of our students truly possess a real education for the real world.
- We must devote more resources to improving the writing ability of our undergraduates even if that means tying up resources in small writing seminars for first year students.

What is Concordia about? Forty years of participation and experience lead me to these conclusions:

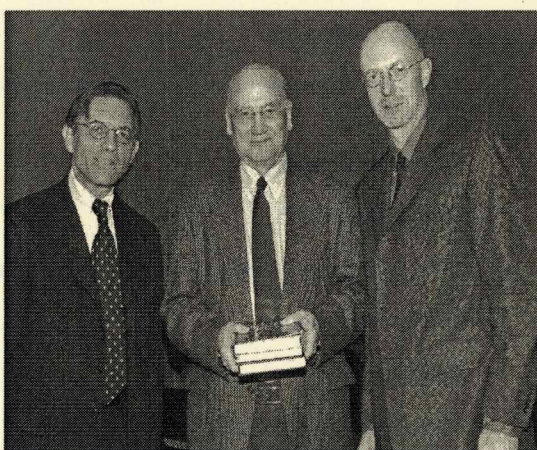
- Concordia is about conveying skills to people, especially people who are often the first in their families to attend university.
- Concordia is about talented individuals, be they brilliant scholars like Jane Stewart, Renaissance women like June Chaikelson, or first-class secretaries and departmental administrators like Donna Whittaker.
- And Concordia is about innovation, new horizons and dreams that can come true, not just for students, staff and faculty, but for the sake of humanity. ■

The Saleh Sassoon Mahlab Lecture Series on the History of Jewish-Muslim Relations

On October 5, the History Department sponsored the inaugural lecture of the Saleh Sassoon Mahlab Lecture Series. This annual lecture series, supported by the generosity of Naim Mahlab in honour of his father, a Jewish merchant who traveled widely in the Arab world, emphasizes the long history of co-operation between Muslims and Jews. The initial lecture, entitled "Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages," was presented by Dr. Mark Cohen, Princeton's Professor of Near Eastern History. The overflow crowd of almost 300 included students, faculty, many senior Concordia administrators and a large number of people from the wider Montreal community. The series is organized by Professor Dana Sajdi.



Professor Mark Cohen, Princeton University, with Professor Dana Sajdi



Professor Cohen, Mr. Naim Mahlab, series' sponsor, and Professor Graham Carr, Chair, Department of History

Photos Courtesy of PBL Photography Inc.

UPCOMING PUBLIC LECTURES

Monday, October 25th, 18:00, Hall Building, H-507 (1455 de Maisonneuve W.)

"The Legacy of the May 4th Movement of 1919: Has Mr. Science Murdered Mr. Democracy?"

Dr. Robin Porter

Counsellor for Science and Technology, British Embassy in Beijing, and former Assistant Professor of History, Loyola College

Thursday, October 28th, 20:30, Hall Building, H-531 (1455 de Maisonneuve W.)

"Museums, Memorials, Historic Sites: The Problems and Promise of Public History"

Dr. Edward Linenthal

Edward M. Penson Professor of Religion and American Culture and Chancellor's Public Scholar, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

History Department Faculty Colloquium Series

All Department colloquia take place at 12:00 in LB-608 (Rudé Seminar Room), McConnell Building, 1400 de Maisonneuve W.

Friday, November 12th

"It's a Man's Job...Or Is It? 1930s Images of Soviet Women and the Defence of their Country"

Dr. Alison Rowley

Friday, January 28th

"The Great Canadian Birthday Party: National Identity Viewed Through July 1st Celebrations, 1962-1992"

Dr. Matthew Hayday

Friday, March 11th

"The Evangelical Construction of the Pious Slave in Ante-Bellum Georgia"

Dr. Frederick Bode

Friday, April 8th

"The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Radio Event"

Dr. Mary Vipond



History Department
1455 deMaisonneuve W
Montreal, QC H3G 1M8
Tel: 514-848-2424, ex.
2435
Fax: 514-848-4538
E-mail:
history@alcor.concordia.ca
http://artsandscience.
concordia.ca/history/